

THE MIRROR *Weekend Section*

Bennett's Pizza, Subs And Salads Is A True Holland Family Business

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MIRROR REPORTER

When 16-year-old Kyle Bennett started talking jobs in preparation for getting his driver's license, his father Dwayne had an idea.

"I thought, if I wanted to spend time with him, I would need to be his coach, teacher or boss. I figured I could be his boss," Dwayne said.

In March, Kyle's part-time job search became a reality, as the entire family opened Bennett's Pizza, Fresh Subs and Salads, at 7130 Airport Hwy., the former Hungry Howie's location.

Kyle inspects and cuts the pizzas, 13-year-old Cortney answers the phone, 15-year-old Dustin folds boxes and helps make pizzas, and mom Carol uses Dwayne's special recipes to create fresh dough and sauce daily.

Knowing that Carol doesn't like pizza sauce, Dwayne worked until he created one that even she would love.

"I figured if she liked it, everyone would like it," Dwayne said, although he wouldn't divulge the secret ingredient.

"We've gotten calls from people complimenting our sauce," Carol added.

Dwayne also tried out different dough recipes, which Carol mixes up from scratch. Customers can choose a variety of seasonings to enhance the crust as



The Bennett family took over the Hungry Howie's location on Airport Highway and creates fresh pizza, subs and salads daily. Pictured are (from left) Dwayne, Carol, Cortney, Kyle and Dustin Bennett.

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well. Butter, butter cheese, Cajun, ranch, onion and garlic herb are among the flavors offered.

Specialty pizzas include the all meat, bacon cheddar cheeseburger, Philly steak and barbecue chicken.

Dwayne is working on 10 pizza combinations he plans to introduce over the next few months, as they learn to make them fast and efficiently.

One that's in the works: a chicken quesadilla pizza,

Kyle's favorite, which has chicken, cheese and salsa.

Bennett's Pizza also has calzone-style subs. Steak, mushrooms, cheese or Italian toppings – anything that could go on a pizza goes inside the wrapped-up

crust. After baking, it's opened up to add lettuce and other sub-type toppings.

Customers also rave about Bennett's wings and chunks, which have a special buffalo sauce, and are

baked instead of deep fried. The baking means the chicken isn't as messy – or fattening.

Bennett's also makes fresh salads daily, from the meaty antipasto to the Greek, chef and garden salads. A large salad can feed up to four people.

The special dough is also used to make three-cheese or buttered breadsticks with dipping sauce, and cinnamon bread with icing for dipping.

Despite spending every dinnertime at the shop, the Bennetts haven't yet tired of pizza.

"It's our favorite food," Carol said. "We're not sick of it yet."

The Bennett children are gaining real-world skills such as customer service, production and marketing. Kyle gives samples and coupons to his friends at teachers at St. John's Jesuit High School, while Dustin and Cortney share the news at Springfield Middle School.

"We know thousands of people in the community. They've been surprised to learn that we have our own pizza shop," Carol said. "It's been so much fun getting to know new people."

Bennett's is open Monday through Thursday 11:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. and Friday and Saturday 11:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m. The shop is closed on Sunday. For more information, call (419) 867-9991.